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Testimony presented to the **PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE**

IN OPPOSITION to H. B. No. 5158 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF FIREARMS.

by Robert T. Crook, Director

February 18, 2010

STRONGLY OPPOSE Sec. 10. Removal of the words, **[at retail,]** would eliminate sale of ALL long guns between individuals, requiring that an FFL (federally licensed firearms dealer) be involved, adding cost to the seller/buyer, a loss of personal freedom, inconvenience, and additional administration while doing nothing to enhance public safety. There will also be a cost in manpower and administration to the DPS State Police Weapons Division for computerized entry of this data and inspection time, although DPS claims NO fiscal impact.

What is the compelling state interest or need to change the statutes for rifles and shotguns- to the extent they are treated as if they are handguns? For several decades, since gun laws were established, the distinction between handguns and rifles/shotguns has been clear: handguns are the preferred choice of criminals. What is the problem in society that this extensive change of legislation is going to fix? Can the proponents of this bill point to a problem?

This is a Registration proposal, an anathema to gun owners and not without cause. We need only to look to Great Britain, Australia, South Africa, and California, New York, Chicago, Washington DC, and others where Registration has led to Confiscation. In no instance has registration/confiscation lowered the crime rate, and data indicates it has increased criminality. Ostensibly, elimination of the two words is a simple change to standardize procedures – BUT it inappropriately mixes apples (handguns) and oranges (long guns), decreases police resources, will not affect criminals, has a significant impact on gun owners and firearms retailers, and will accomplish nothing in furthering public safety.

We believe this section, if passed, will lead to more problems for ALL firearms owners and ALL associated with sales, administration and enforcement. CT currently has predominately reasoned firearms procedures and firearms laws. Our message, – If it ain't broke, Don't fix it!

STRONGLY OPPOSE the Deletion **[and the provisions of this subsection]** in **Subsec (b).** This parallels the removal of “at retail” and the same problems apply. It would eliminate those currently exempt from registration (lines 432 to 440): i.e., any federal marshal, parole officer or peace officer; state permit to carry a pistol or revolver holders; active members of the armed forces or reserve components; or holders of a valid hunting license. This would cause ALL Long Guns sold to be registered. The CSP Weapons Div has already coerced/intimidated many gun stores to accomplish this registration requirement without law adding to retailer's administrative efforts and DPS inspection requirements. **We recommend the DPS retain THEIR current standard: “Rifles and Shotguns** Sales of long arms between non-licensed dealers, commonly referred to as second hand sales, require no paperwork or notification, however, it is strongly recommended that all firearms be voluntarily registered. In the event of loss or theft of firearm this will provide easy retrieval of information for insurance or police information and assure return of recovered property. (exception: sales conducted at gun shows require NICS authorization check and transfer paperwork) The only restrictions are the seller may not sell to anyone under 18 years of age, or to anyone the seller knows is prohibited from possessing firearms.”

This subsection was passed in 1990 prior to Instant Check and is now essentially outdated. We recommend the deletion of the complete section as unneeded for long guns. The same Registration language and forms would be retained for handguns (Sec 29-33). We would also include the Waiting Period provision, in Subsection (a) (lines 402-403) and in (b), as an unwarranted imposition on only selective citizens (collectors, rifle and shotgun target shooters, and citizens who deem they have a need for home self-protection), and a waste of police/retailer administrative effort. There is no legitimate reason to discriminate and preclude ANY legitimate citizen from immediate purchase who passes an Instant Check. The counter argument will be there should be a "cooling off" period, although there is no scientific basis for this claim. The purpose of all previous waiting periods was to allow law enforcement officials time to determine whether the purchaser was a prohibited person. With Instant Check fully implemented, the check time being measured in minutes, there is no logical reason for any waiting period - firearms purchasers are either legal or illegal to purchase. Elimination will also reduce State Police/retailers administration efforts.

We also suggest elimination of the requirement "shall be enclosed in a package, the paper or wrapping of which shall be securely fastened", Subsection (a) (lines 415-416), as outdated, inappropriate, and unenforced.

OPPOSE Sec. 11. The requirement that gun show promoters notify the Commissioner of Public Safety of any planned gun show. We have been informed that CSP is currently requiring notification without law. State statute currently gives this authority to Connecticut's local police departments. Police should communicate with each other. Why impose more requirements on small business entrepreneurs? This proposal has been rejected in previous years.

SUPPORT Sec. 3. This proposal dealing with Carrying a Firearm and Hunting While Intoxicated level is compatible with other intoxication statutes. However testing requirements for a blood alcohol test such as is required by the Department of Motor Vehicles, in Boating statutes, and others, must be included to establish a legal prosecution standard, prevent abuse, and inform the public of procedures.